

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
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AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY MOUAKCHOTT
COMISEASTFOR

S E C R E T SANA 1499

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, YS, YE, MR, SO, ET, FT, SU, SA, UR
SUBJECT: YEMENI FOREIGN MINISTER ON TAIZ CONFERENCE

REF: SANA 1222

BEGIN SUMMARY. ON APRIL 17 FOREIGN MINISTER AL-ASNAJ CONFIRMED BY AND LARGE WHAT HAD EARLIER BEEN TOLD EMBASSY BY SUDANESE AMBASSADOR RE RECENT TAIZ CONFERENCE EMPHASIZING (A) APPARENT SOMALI AGREEMENT FOR INDEPENDENCE OF DJIBOUTI,
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(B) COOPERATION AMONG LITTORAL STATES FOR INCREASED ECONOMIC AND MILITARY AID FROM OIL RICH STATES AND (C) NO DECISIONS RE SUPPORT FOR ERITREAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT OR ACTION AGAINST ETHIOPIA. AL-ASNAJ SAID THAT THE SAUDIS ARE NOW URGING CAUTION AS A FOLLOW-UP TO THE TAIZ MEETING, LEST ACTIVISM ENERGIZE SOVIETS TO MOVE AGAINST MODERATE REGIONS IN AREA; EFFORTS, HOWEVER, WILL CONTINUE TO WEAN AWAY SOMALIA FROM

MOSCOW. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING APRIL 17 MEETING, FOREIGN MINISTER ABDALLAH AL-ASNAJ DISCUSSED THE RECENT TAIZ CONFERENCE IN SOME DETAIL, CONFIRMING BY AND LARGE WHAT WE HAD EARLIER BEEN TOLD BY THE SUDANESE AMBASSADOR (SEE REFTEL).

2. AL-ASNAJ STATED THAT AS A RESULT OF THE DISCUSSIONS DURING THE TAIZ CONFERENCE IT NOW APPEARS THAT THE SOMALIS HAVE ACCEPTED THE IDEA OF AN INDEPENDENT DJIBOUTI ON THE CONDITION THAT THE ETHIOPIANS MAKE NO AGGRESSIVE MOVES TOWARD THE NEW STATE. AL-ASNAJ COMMENTED THAT THE SOMALIS SEEM SINCERE AND HE WAS REASONABLY OPTIMISTIC THAT DJIBOUTI HAS A CHANCE TO SURVIVE. (TOOK THE OCCASION TO INFORM HIM OF THE IMMINENT OPENING OF THE CONSULATE GENERAL IN DJIBOUTI.)

3. AL-ASNAJ ALSO STATED THAT ONE OF THE "SECRET DISCUSSIONS" AT THE CONFERENCE RELATED TO PROJECTED COOPERATION BY BOTH PDRY AND THE YARG ON THE DEFENSE OF THE BAB AL-MANDEB. AL-ASNAJ ADDED THAT A JOINT COMMITTEE WILL MEET TO DRAW UP A SHOPPING LIST OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT WHICH EACH STATE WILL USE TO COVER ITS OWN NEEDS IN THIS REGARD. AL-ASNAJ COMMENTED HE WAS SKEPTICAL THAT THE COMMITTEE WILL MEET IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

4. AL-ASNAJ CONTINUED THAT THE "POOR STATES" IN THE REGION HAVE ALSO AGREED TO POOL THEIR EFFORTS IN ORDER TO APPROACH THE OIL RICH STATES FOR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. HE
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SAID THAT MAURITANIA WAS ADDED TO THE GROUP AS A WAY OF EMPHASIZING THE FACT THAT THERE ARE POOR STATES IN THE ARAB WORLD AS WELL AS RICH ONES.

5. AL-ASNAJ ALSO ECHOED WHAT I HAD EARLIER BEEN TOLD BY THE PRESIDENT THAT NO DECISIONS WERE TAKEN BY THE CONFERENCE RELATING TO SUPPORT FOR THE ERITREAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT OR TO SUPPPORT ACTIONS AGAINST ETHIOPIA. AL-ASNAJ SAID

THAT ONE REASON FOR THIS WAS THE OBVIOUS PRO-ETHIOPIAN ROLE WHICH THE PDRY PRESIDENT ASSUMED AT THE CONFERENCE. AL-ASNAJ ALSO OTED IN THIS REGARD THAT ETHIOPIAN/YEMENI RELATIONS CONTINUE TO BE "BAD" BUT THAT YEMEN IS NOT ACTIVELY SUPPORTING THE ERITREAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT. IN FACT, AL-ASNAJ SAID THAT THE IS PERSONALLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE MAKE-UP OF THE ERITREAN MOVEMENT AND HAS SUBMITTED A WRITTEN REPORT TO THE SAUDIS ON THE SUBJECT AL-ASNAJ STATED THAT LITTLE IS PRESENTLY KNWON ABOUT THE VARIOUS FA: TIONS OF THE ERITREAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT AND IF THE

ARABS ARE NOT CAREFUL THEY MAY END UP CREATING A GREATER LEFTIST THREAT TO THE REGION THAN PDRY. AL-ASNAJ SAID HE BELIEVES THE ARABS SHOULD PROCEED VERY CAUTIOUSLY BEFORE FULLY ESPOUSING THE ERITREAN CAUSE. AT THE SAME TIME, AL-ASNAJ SAID THAT IT NOW APPEARS ETHIOPIA HAS SWUNG FULLY TO THE SOVIET CAMP AND EVERY REPORT HE IS RECEIVING FROM HIS EMBASSY THERE POINTS TO TOTAL SOVIET SUPPORT FOR THE MENGISTU REGIME.

6. AL-ASNAJ ALSO CONFIRMED THAT THE SOVIETS WERE QUITE DISTURBED ABOUT THE TAIZ CONFERENCE AND ALL REPORTS POINT TO A MAJOR SOVIET EFFORT TO KEEP BOTH THE PDRY REGIME AND THE SOMALIS FROM ATTENDING. AL-ASNAJ SAID THAT IT WAS THIS SOVIET DISSATISFACTION WHICH ALSO INSPIRED HIM TO URGE ON THE TAIZ CONFEREES THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THERE WERE "SECRET" AGREEMENTS REACHED DURING THE CONFERENCE. AL-ASNAJ SAID THAT WHILE THESE SECRET AGREEMENTS WERE NOT VERY SIGNI-
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FICANT HE WAS SURE THAT THEY WILL MAKE THE SOVIETS BELIEVE MORE TOOK PLACE DURING THE CONFERENCE THAN ACTUALLY DID. AL-ASNAJ THOUGHT THAT THIS WILL SOW FURTHER SUSPICIONS IN SOVIET MINDS ABOUT FUTURE INTENTIONS OF BOTH THE PDRY AND THE SOMALI REGIMES. AL-ASNAJ ADDED THAT EVEN IF PDRY TELLS THE SOVIETS EVERYTHING THAT WENT ON IN TAIZ, HE IS SURE THE SOVIETS WON'T BELIEVE IT.

7. AL-ASNAJ CONTINUED THAT HE NOW DOES NOT BELIEVE THERE WILL BE AN IMMEDIATE FOLLOW UP TO THE TAIZ CONFERENCE PRIMARILY BECAUSE THE SAUDIS ARE URGING CAUTION. THE LATTER FEAR THAT FURTHER ACTIVITY MIGHT INFLUENCE THE SOVIETS TO TAKE A MORE ACTIVE ANTI-MODERATE POSITION IN THE REGION AND THIS, THE SAUDIS SAY, WOULD NOT BE OPPORTUNE AT A TIME WHEN THE ARAB WORKDIS STILL FACED WITH THE MAJOR PROBLEM OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI QUESTION. AL-ASNAJ WENT ON THAT, NONETHELESS, THE SAUDIS DO AGREE THAT A MAJOR EFFORT SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN TO WEAN AWAY THE SOMALIS, WHO ARE NOW DESIROUS OF BREAKING THEIR SOVIET CONNECTION. AL-ASNAJ SAID THAT PRINCE SAUD CAME BACK FROM HIS RECENT VISIT TO MOGADISCIO PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS AND PREPARED TO RECOMMEND INCREASED SAUDI AID FOR PRESIDENT BARRE.
SCOTES

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